

REAL SINGING AND WORDLESS VOICES PLAYING TUNES

Public's Attitude Toward Singers Who Boast They Have Never Studied the Art of Singing

By W. J. HENDERSON.

TOWARD the close of a busy season of music, the professional commentator finds himself inevitably considering some of the most ancient and vexed questions that arise in the course of the experience. Certain things seem to be settled. A violinist has to study violin playing. No one ever questions that, nor does any heaven born genius arise who can play violin without studying. Even Heifetz and Rosen and Seidel and Elman and Zimbalist and Satcha Jacobson had to study.

It is not at all probable that any one will dispute the assertion that it is necessary to study the technique of piano playing. Hoffmann, Paderewski, Bauer, Gubrilowitch, Novacek, Levitski and all the rest of them were once pupils of this or that pianist manufacturer. They all had to practice scales and arpeggios and double thirds and all those other joys of our youth that made our mornings so happy and gave our neighbors so much pleasure. Some of us can recall the heavy sighs we heaved whenever we saw the names of Musio Clementi or Carl Czerny or old father J. B. Cramer or—well, never mind. Some one will be guessing our age in a minute.

But when suddenly along comes a charming woman with a bewitching smile and a row of pearls between her lips and declares that she never studied the art of which she is a mistress, what is one to think?

Amelia Galli-Curci says she never studied singing. Now if she had only her beautiful voice and no art we could rest unperturbed. But she has the art. She has a beautiful cantabile, made of perfectly rounded phrases, sustained by well controlled breath, she ripples off florid music as if she were to the manner born, which, by the way, she is. And most of all she has a her musicalship, if not her technical skill, in her delivery of recitative. Even the astute Philip Hale discovered that when she visited Boston. One or two New York observers also had discovered it, but most of them were entirely occupied with comparing prose poems about her voice.

Galli-Curci's Singing.

Adeline Patti used to tell this same story about herself. She declared that she did not know how she sang. She just opened her mouth and the music fell out. Bousting of this kind should always be taken with at least half a teaspoonful of sal ammoniac dissolved in a little filtered water.

Mme. Galli-Curci is without doubt the greatest most generously. She has a voice which sounds as if it were what the professional singers call naturally placed. But supposing, dear student of singing, you had a voice which flowed out your mouth with all the smoothness and facility of Mme. Galli-Curci's, but you could not sing, would you not be a disappointed man? Would you not be a disappointed man? Would you not be a disappointed man?

And what, dear reader, think you, made the great sensation of the evening? Was it Galli-Curci's musicalship and heartrending "Oro per sempre addio"? Was it the despairing quality of "Dedemona's" willow song, "Pianissimo cantando"? Was it the terrible sound of "Sanguis Sanguis"? No, none of these. Was it, then, the tremendous "Credo" of "Faust"? No, it was his "Era la notte, Casio dormiva." It was sung ravishingly low, sotto voce, as the composer directs, and with a dramatic intensity which no other living barytone can equal. The audience literally rose at Maurel. It was a triumph of pure dramatic singing, in which not a single tone was shouted, for the whole effect was that of a whispered communication.

Let some one do that next season as Maurel used to do it, and the same old thrill will come again.

Furthermore, despite the present deplorable state of public taste in the opera house, good singing is not always in vain. It requires in that theatre the aid of situation and the picture, for without these the indolent opera-goer cannot be brought into anything approaching sympathy with the music of whose tone he persistently remains ignorant. But observe the demeanor of the audience toward the close of the first act of "Lodoletta."

Spell of the Vocal Arts.

It is at this point that Mr. Caruso does some of the most beautiful singing he has done in recent years. The audience hangs breathless on every tone. Now Mr. Caruso has never told us that he did not study singing. He has never boasted that he does not know how he accomplishes his vocal effects. On the contrary, he has said much of the greatest value and said it well about the art of the singer.

Lilli Lehmann, who spent many years in deep study of the mechanism of singing, wrote a book about it. She never proclaimed that her singing was merely accidental and without self-consciousness.

But the thing to bear in mind is that even if there can be singers who succeed without studying they are exceptions to the rule. And even the most unthinking of opera audiences yield to the spell of a beautiful vocal art.

"Outside of the opera house—well, that's another story. In that wide realm of music which lies beyond the walls of the theatre you find yourself in company with all those famous concert artists mentioned at the beginning of this article, and to stay in that company you must know how and why you do everything. For if you don't, you are going to discover to your regret that the real music loving public does."

Naturally the thoughtful person asks why it is that so many opera singers sing with so little polish, or to be candid, with so much rudeness. Did you ever consider the attitude of the common type of opera-goer to opera? What does it mean to him? Is he to be polite and use the masculine gender? What does it mean to him? Is he to be polite and use the masculine gender?

Begin at the beginning. How many of your friends ever read the libretto of an opera before they go to a performance? How many know what the persons on the stage are saying to one another? How many understand the dramatic significance of a scene? You know, dear reader, that very few either know or care about these matters.

These people go to the opera to sit and listen to wordless voices playing tunes just as instruments might. And they are not in the least care how the tunes are played, so long as the musical quality of the instrument pleases them. What comment do you continually hear among opera-goers? "Oh, I think Mme. Scaramelli's voice is divine." "Well, I must say, I can't say that fellow Barcola's voice is divine."

And do you think they value anything delicate, finished, elegant? Who can forget those two successive performances of "Manon" not many seasons back, in the first of which Miss Farrar and Mr. Caruso gave of their best, and art and were rewarded with moderate applause. At the next performance they belittled at the top of their lungs and the house went into ecstasies. You may be sure neither of them has forgotten the lesson.

A London Reminiscence.

And yet, and yet and yet? Shall we plunge into a slough of despond? Shall we really believe that even in an opera house in this time, when for several years the public has incessantly been led to a lower level of appreciation than it has attained at any other period within the past thirty years, so delicately finished singing is so recognized?

A man often sits in the left side of the orchestra not far from the front, watching the stage with retrospective eyes. One can see that he is dreaming most of the time, and yet that he is very much alive to the present. A great man in his day, Victor Maurel gave thoughtfully on the new generation. And he makes me remember.

It was a night in the season in London in 1889. An eager crowd hastened to the Lyceum, Henry Irving's theatre, for the "Cavalleria" of Verdi was to be given that night, but the entire original cast, except Miss Pataconi, the Dedemona, had been brought from La Scala.

Tamagno, who had been chosen by Verdi and trained by him for the title

and Jacques Thibaud will not take place.

This afternoon will be given the first of a series of popular concerts at the Greenwich Village Theatre under the joint management of the theatre and the Greenwich House Music School. These concerts will be given every Sunday afternoon in April as a result of the growth of the music school, which was opened last year, to impart musical training and an appreciation of music to the children of the lower West Side.

The artists who will appear at the opening concert this afternoon are: Marcel Van Dresser, soprano, and Satcha Jacobson, Russian violinist, who will be assisted by Clara Babnowitz at the piano. Others to appear at the subsequent concerts are George Harris, Jr., May Mukle, David Blum, Katherine Ruth Heyman, the Edith Ruble Trio and Louise Homer, Jr.

Mr. Staberg Hall, soprano, will give a recital of Scandinavian songs this afternoon in the Princess Theatre. The programme, which is long and varied in sections taken from some eighteen composers, contains the Bull's "Bakterjens Sange" and Grieg's "Det Første Møde."

To-night, at 8 o'clock, the first of a series of spring dance recitals will be given at the Greenwich Village Theatre by Michio Ito, Tullio Lindahl and Toshi Komori, with an entirely new programme, which will be seen for the first time in public in New York, with new settings, costumes and properties. The opera was not new to them. London acquired it. But I had heard of the two great men in the cast, and went to study their impersonations.

Maurel's Triumph.

And what, dear reader, think you, made the great sensation of the evening? Was it Galli-Curci's musicalship and heartrending "Oro per sempre addio"? Was it the despairing quality of "Dedemona's" willow song, "Pianissimo cantando"? Was it the terrible sound of "Sanguis Sanguis"? No, none of these. Was it, then, the tremendous "Credo" of "Faust"? No, it was his "Era la notte, Casio dormiva." It was sung ravishingly low, sotto voce, as the composer directs, and with a dramatic intensity which no other living barytone can equal. The audience literally rose at Maurel. It was a triumph of pure dramatic singing, in which not a single tone was shouted, for the whole effect was that of a whispered communication.

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A second violin recital by Mayo Wadler will take place on Friday evening, April 12, in Aeolian Hall. The programme is as follows: Goldmark, suite; Bach, concerto in A minor with string quintet accompaniment; Tchaikovsky, "Poeme Lyrique"; Arensky, "Berceuse"; Debussy, "La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin"; Stoeckel, "Humoresque"; Cocherd-Taylor, ballade.

Aurelio Giorni, Italian pianist, will give a second recital on Sunday afternoon, April 14, in Aeolian Hall before going to the war.

A recital of France Woodmansee, pianist, scheduled for Sunday afternoon, April 14, in Aeolian Hall, will be postponed to April 14.

Alma Real, a Mexican soprano, will make her New York debut in a song recital, who will present a musical satire on the Italian operatic finale entitled "Italian Salad."

The last subscription concert of the Letz Quartet will take place to-morrow evening in Aeolian Hall. The programme follows: Quartet, B. Brahms; quartet, D. Ambrosio, and quartet, opus 18, No. 2, G. Beethoven.

A special feature of the concert of the Schola Cantorum on Tuesday evening, April 9, at Carnegie Hall, will be examples of the three varieties of American folk song. The negro group will consist of three part songs, all based on traditional "negro spirituals" sung in slavery. The first of this group, "God's Chorus," is from the collection of Natalie Curtis, now Mrs. Burling, whose work in collecting Indian folk lore also is well known. During her stay in the South she was impressed with the unique improvisation in part singing of wholly untaught negroes.

With the aid of the phonograph she made complete and accurate record of the harmonies, as well as the melodies of the old songs, harmonies which the colored people improvised as they sang, and which, while simple, have the rich, warm, though archaic, quality of the truly primitive negro music. This is the first time that the old song mentioned, just as it is sung by negroes who have no knowledge whatever of music notation, has ever been prepared for concert performance, and in fact, it is the first record ever published of this song in any form. Miss Curtis believes. An interesting contrast to the primitive negro music will be furnished by the performance of two negro folk songs arranged by a musician of that race, Harry T. Burleigh. These are striking examples of the use to which the negro composer puts the old melodies of his

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CONCERTS OF THE WEEK.

SUNDAY—Maud Powell, violinist, Carnegie Hall, 8 P. M. Friends of Music, Ritz-Carlton Hotel, 8 P. M. Maria van Dresser, soprano; Satcha Jacobson, violinist, joint recital, Greenwich Village Theatre, 8:30 P. M. Mme. Staberg Hall, soprano, Princess Theatre, 8:15 P. M. Yvette Guilbert, French songs, Maxine Elliott's Theatre, 8:15 P. M. Verdi's Requiem, Metropolitan Opera House, 8:30 P. M. Rosa Raisa, soprano, Hippodrome, 8:20 P. M.

MONDAY—Letz Quartet, Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M.

TUESDAY—Schola Cantorum, Carnegie Hall, 8:15 P. M. Maurice Dambois, cellist, Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M. Schumann Club, Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M.

WEDNESDAY—Alma Real, soprano, Aeolian Hall, 8 P. M.

THURSDAY—Alice Joiselius, soprano, Aeolian Hall, 8 P. M. Mme. Shomer-Rothenberg in folk song recital for Palestine Restoration Fund, Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M.

FRIDAY—David and Clara Mannes, violin and piano recital, Aeolian Hall, 8:30 P. M. May Peterson, soprano, in association with High School Student Clubs, Carnegie Hall, 8:30 P. M. Mayo Wadler, violinist, Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M.

Messa, Martelli, Amato, Althouse, De Segura, Bada, Malatesta, Rother, Leonardi, Reschiglian and D'Angelo. D'Angelo will conduct.

Other operas of the week will be as follows:

"Shanewis" and "Pagliacci" as a double bill on Wednesday evening. The American opera will be sung by Mmes. Braslau, Sundelius, Howard, Tiffany and Arden and Messrs. Althouse, Chalmers, Bada, Bloch, Audisio and Laurelli. "Pagliacci" will be sung by Miss Muzio and Messrs. Martelli, Scotti, Laurelli and Audisio. Mr. Moranzoni will conduct both operas.

A special matinee of "Madama Butterfly" on Thursday afternoon with Mmes. Farrar, Formis and Egener and Mr. Moranzoni will conduct. Mr. Angelo and Audisio. Mr. Papi will conduct.

Maria on Thursday evening with Mmes. Barilli and Formis and Messrs. Caruso, Didur, Malatesta, Laurelli, Mr. Bodansky conducting.

"Marouf" on Friday evening with Mmes. Alia and Howard and Messrs. De Luca, Rother, De Segura, Laurelli, Bada, Malatesta, Reis, Bloch, Audisio and Leonard. Miss Galli and Mr. Bonagalli will conduct the orchestra. Mr. Moranzoni will conduct.

"Cavalleria Rusticana" and "Le Coq d'Or" as a double bill will be the Saturday matinee bill. "Cavalleria Rusticana" will be sung by Mmes. Barilli, Perini and Matfield and Messrs. Lazaro and Chalmers. Mr. Moranzoni conducting. The Russian opera-pantomime will be sung by Mmes. Garrison, Sundelius and Robeson and Messrs. Diaz, Didur, Tussaud, Reschiglian and Audisio and Messrs. Althouse, Chalmers, Bada, Bloch, Audisio and Laurelli. "Pagliacci" will be sung by Miss Muzio and Messrs. Martelli, Scotti, Laurelli and Audisio. Mr. Moranzoni will conduct both operas.

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"Marouf" on Friday evening with Mmes. Alia and Howard and Messrs. De Luca, Rother, De Segura, Laurelli, Bada, Malatesta, Reis, Bloch, Audisio and Leonard. Miss Galli and Mr. Bonagalli will conduct the orchestra. Mr. Moranzoni will conduct.

"Cavalleria Rusticana" and "Le Coq d'Or" as a double bill will be the Saturday matinee bill. "Cavalleria Rusticana" will be sung by Mmes. Barilli, Perini and Matfield and Messrs. Lazaro and Chalmers. Mr. Moranzoni conducting. The Russian opera-pantomime will be sung by Mmes. Garrison, Sundelius and Robeson and Messrs. Diaz, Didur, Tussaud, Reschiglian and Audisio and Messrs. Althouse, Chalmers, Bada, Bloch, Audisio and Laurelli. "Pagliacci" will be sung by Miss Muzio and Messrs. Martelli, Scotti, Laurelli and Audisio. Mr. Moranzoni will conduct both operas.

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